

my edit

Brendan McLaughlin,
The Workers City Group,
Glasgow.

Let me first applaud the Glasgow Herald for keeping its pages open to the letters which the citizens of Glasgow have written to express their outrage at the treatment of Elspeth King and Michael Donnelly.

The mischievous, misanthropic rantings of Jack McLean and the misinformed racial comments apart, the range of comment has been considered and intelligent. I understand that it attracted the biggest postbag the Herald has ever received. In keeping with the principles of our democratic tradition, of which we are all proud, the transition of a private-ill to a public-issue requires the actions of people which only become effective within the cohesiveness of a group.

JKN
That the 'Workers City Group' became involved in the the 'Elspeth King Affair', is neither mysterious nor as sinister as some would like it to be. Moreover, that they are vociferous in their concern over the privatisation of the City-Centre and the Glasgow Green, is consistent with the fears of many Glaswegians not least those who were displaced in the demolition derby of the sixties and seventies.

Out of sight out of mind seem to be the standing orders of the District Council. Central Government will not acknowledge their predicament nor credit their heritage, ergo, neither can we, laments the Labour Group leaders. So, many of those citizens of Glasgow, condemned to live in Local Government controlled schemes which have turned into wastelands due to the refusal of private investors to follow the people and Central Government to provide funds to pay for essential services, are further impoverished by the constant erosion of the municipal morality on which they have come to depend.

Perhaps the Labour controlled Glasgow District Council have forgotten that the essential difference between a Labour Administration and a Conservative one is municipalism. Where public-works and provision of services not only creates much needed employment, but was intended to guarantee a basic standard of living below which people should not fall.

With savage intent, the Conservative Government of the eighties has declared opposition to any form of State involvement in balancing the effects of economic policies. (If Maynard Keynes was alive today, he'd be turning in his grave).

It would seem that the Labour Party have been so envious of the electoral success of the Tories that they decided to employ similar tactics. This, perhaps, could be slightly understood in that whenever a Labour Government is elected, it has to undo the damage that Tory policies have caused and the biggest obstacle to social and economic recovery is seen as the massive burden of municipal responsibility.

Maybe I'm wrong... I hope I'm wrong... but it is difficult to turn a blind eye to the fearful developments which have gone on in Glasgow throughout the last decade.

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It's not a happy time for Local Authorities throughout Britain with the Central Government doing its utmost to dismantle and discredit them in order to undermine their threatening adherence to the democratic function. Among many other manipulations, the determined drive to sell off the Council housing stock and the imposition of the Poll-Tax have been designed to dilute the power of local democracy.

~~Notwithstanding, the Labour Group in Glasgow don't have to compound the wrong by playing the same game with those people who elected them.~~

Edmund Burke, the father of Tory Party Philosophy claimed that, once elected, he should be free to do what he thinks fit for his constituents. Labour Party Philosophy developed in direct opposition to this, yet, Pat Lally and his supporters would appear to have fallen into the same unilateral abyss.

✓ Glaswegians have watched in bemusement as their City was handed over to private developers to be refurbished, using local Authority grants, and sold to people who would normally never have considered living anywhere near the City Centre.

Yes of course they are entitled to buy houses in 'The Merchant City' and they genuinely shouldn't be begrudged such a privilege, but what about the folk who were promised that they could return to the areas where they were brought up.

It's well known that many people were delighted to move out to the schemes, but just as many had to be all but forced out of the areas of their birth. It's a matter of history that it wasn't long before the scheme dream was washed away in the dampness and rank abandonment which such living quickly became.

✓ The Merchant City is now a populated ghost town...no weans, no prams at the close, no corner shops and none of the residents ever spied. They drive into their basement garages, ascend in the private lift to their floor and lock themselves in their houses. When they can afford it, they then buy a neat semi in one of the owner-occupier estates in the more desirable peripheral areas. Then the process starts again with another reasonably well paid young transient or city company.

✓ The point is, now the properties are in private hands they are lost to the public housing stock forever and like it or lump it, citizens living in the appalling scheme houses are stuck there for good, forgotten.

~~What is all this to do with the City of Culture celebrations, the 'Workers City Group' and their highly visible support of Elspeth King and Michael Donnelly?~~

~~It's quite simple.~~

Take Michael Kelly's Provostship as a starting point. Not many people thought that there was anything sinister about the 'Glasgow's Miles better' campaign. Indeed it has almost given Mr. Kelly immortal status in the City. But when you peer closely, you will see that right down to the bright wee sunshine logo, everything about it was controlled by private franchise.

However good intentioned the campaign claimed to be, it became a confection factory which chopped up the sinew of genuine Glaswegian culture, burying the tough and indestructable parts in the shallow foundations of a new glittery and glamorous Glasgow, and wrapping the rest up in sweet papers for tourists to suck.

Pat Lally must have loved all of this as it left him free to continue his power mongering and, anyway, he has a special liking for tourists. He has been to Florence and has seen for himself what tourism can do. Well, so have many other people. The magnificent vistas and beautiful architecture have been well nurtured and protected by the hands of history and are a joy to behold. However, up and down the streets, you will be rapidly relieved of your holiday money by merchants and dealers and, even, the official local turismo. In short, like most towns that depend on tourism, there is no visible integrity other than retail rip-offs and pathetic panhandling. People employed in these tourist traps are forced to accept very low wages for very long hours and are paid off at the end of the holiday season. Such a place attracts chancers of all types and hypes and it is they who eventually call the shots as far as culture and history is concerned...the character of the city is reduced to what it can sell.

Glasgow developed in modern times as a workers city...that is to say, people came to Glasgow to work. Indeed it is the case that they were as often invited to move here to work by the industrialists who were desperate to employ men and women to keep up with the demand for their manufactures. Life was tough wages were bad and conditions were atrocious but the workers struggled for better conditions and continue to do so to this very day.

Unfortunately, with the economic and capital changes in the international world of business, there has been a long and rapid decline in Glasgow's traditional industries. The usual concomitants of unemployment, occupational drift, social problems and major pressure on Local Government have now been a long time with us.

As Mr. Lally says, 'Glasgow is the first unexpected Cultural Capital of Europe'; perhaps it would be more apt to say 'the first unsuspecting Capital of Europe'. It would be interesting to know how Glasgow was presented in the competition for such a title.

The Workers City Group don't make the same assumption as the District Council, that they know the direction that Glasgow should take in these post-industrial times. What we do know, however, is that to lie supine before the tart of tourism...prescribed by doctor Lally, will alter the character of Glasgow to a fawning, ephemeral excuse of a City where history will be sculpted into a shiny smiling statue of obsequience.

Our right of reply

What has happened to Elspeth King, Curator of the People's Palace, has focused attention on the whole issue of Glasgow as Culture City 1990 and the future of its people. On that point alone there is agreement with Pat Lally.

Unnamed Glasgow District Council executive sources are now telling the Glasgow Herald that Elspeth King and Michael Donnelly, assistant curator, made their priority the extension to the fabric and contents of the People's Palace rather than 'Glasgow's Glasgow' and the 1990 jamboree.

Mr Mark O'Neill on the other hand was heavily involved in preparing the 'Glasgow's Glasgow' exhibition at a time when the Springburn Hall was falling into disrepair and parts of the Springburn public park were being sold off to private house builders.

group leader The connection now being made by his own officials between the District Council's 1990 plans and the shameful treatment of Elspeth King itself gives the lie to the assertions by Labour Lally that there was no political interference with regard to the appointment of the Keeper of Social History.

The mechanism for the political decision taken regarding Elspeth King was Julian Spalding, Director of Galleries and Museums who chaired the appointment committee, whose attitudes on the future direction of the Museums service are in accord with those of his political masters, and whose involvement in the sacking of the staff of the National Museum of Labour History in Manchester is well-documented.

Political direction

That political direction is one of finding ways of accommodating and utilising the commercialisation and privatisation of local council services as laid down by the Tory Government.

Glasgow District Council, led by Pat Lally, has decided to put out to private tender 60% of the work of the city's parks department, and has introduced charges for entry to the McLellan Galleries and 'Glasgow's Glasgow' thereby breaking the long-established principle of free access to our Museums and Galleries.

It has cut 10% off the budgets of all departments to pay for Culture City 1990. It has shed many hundreds of its employees' jobs as part of the process of competitive tendering.

Now it is about to hand over one third of Glasgow Green to private developers and make land available for private house-building on the Green.

Glasgow's 'Labour' establishment is selling off the city's municipal silver to encourage the development of a new investor-friendly Glasgow based on "cultural industries and tourism"....service industries, including financial services, administration, leisure and tourism". (All quotations from Councillor Lally).

The transfer of £157,000 from the Summerston waste disposal project to make up the deficit on 'Glasgow's Glasgow' is just one indicator of this.

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We understand that Pat Lally chaired the all-white appointment committee which chose Julian Spalding. Political direction

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* It is important to note that the Glasgow District Labour Party "has declared the decision not to appoint Mr Elspeth King" and also "has had to remind (Labour) councillors that the party's policy was to oppose any private development on Glasgow Green, including Reel's Royal"

The Culture of Capital

Of the Cultural Capital of Europe title, Labour group leader says "We are going to milk it for all it is worth" and use it to open up employment opportunities and attract relocations.

The cynical language employed here says it all as far as Pat Lally's 'non-dilettante' commitment to culture is concerned.

Having failed over many years to fight to defend jobs in Glasgow's traditional industries, these misnamed labour leaders are now proudly proclaiming their misuse of culture as a commodity to encourage capitalist investment particularly in the low-paid, non-unionised 'service industries'.

The future they project for the working people of Glasgow is one of an underclass of people working for little more than their dole money who will serve and entertain the tourists, administrators and financiers.

This is indeed the culture of Capital.

" A fact of life "

We do not see culture as 'clever and classless and free' is ripe for exploitation. On the contrary, it reflects prevailing class forces and much of it forms part of the ideological cement which helps to maintain power in the hands of the few.

Much of the 1990 Culture City programme consists of traditional bourgeois culture of a fairly unadventurous kind eg opera, theatre, ballet, art exhibitions etc. We are of course in favour of wider access to the best that bourgeois culture has to offer.

Yet this is precisely where the contradiction arises, for so long as that culture is privately-controlled and inevitably seeks to command the highest price it can in the market place, it will continue to remain an elitist activity attended mainly by those who can afford the kind of exorbitant prices charged by Pavarotti's agent and the Harvey Goldsmith agency.

Does Bob Palmer's favourite Castlemilk punter, if she (or he) exists, still feel satisfied after the Pavarotti concert which contained only 32 minutes of her idol singing, at anything from £1 to £5 per minute depending on whether the original or tout prices were paid ? Or was the Pavarotti do not just one gigantic rip-off, sanctioned and promoted by Messrs Palmer, Lally and co. ?

Similarly, in what way does the District Council's £400,000+ down payment towards Frank Sinatra coming to Ibrox do anything to promote the culture of the people of Glasgow ?

The plain 'cultural' "fact of life" which Pat Lally appears so ready to accept is one of commercialism and greed.

An alternative culture

There is an alternative culture to this commercial circus. One which is based on the struggle of oppressed people, who in Glasgow are working class people, together with those writers, singers, artists, playwrights, actors etc who identify themselves with that struggle.

Glasgow has a rich tradition of such a culture and people, from Sandy Rogers and James Macfarlane in the 19th century up to Freddy Anderson, Alasdair Gray and Tom Leonard today.

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This kind of cultural activity has in fact been growing in and around the city in recent years, as it has in Eastern Europe, South Africa and elsewhere. It has taken place independently of the 1990 bandwagon, and continues to flourish.

What the 1990 Festivals Unit has tried to do is take as much of this cultural development under its wing and try to use it for its own economic and political ends.

It is because they do not wish to be used in this way that some of our best writers and cultural workers will have nothing to do with the Festivals Unit or their money.

Of course the most notable of this year's official events have been those like the Ruchazie Street Project and Govan Stories etc which have involved and given free expression to the (extra-) ordinary people of the west of Scotland.

The acid test of these and other of the year's cultural activities will be how far they continue to grow and develop once 1990 is over.

Tells the truth

We are not against culture, on the contrary, we are wholly in favour of a culture which tells the truth about the world, both natural and social. Such a truth cannot but cut through the false images and myths of the Merchant/Culture City created by the well-paid (and -heeled) advertising companies employed by the District Council.

Such a culture cannot but reveal Glasgow as a city of enormous contradictions, ridden with class divisions between those suffering intolerable poverty and housing conditions and the minority of "well-heeled" rich. It is one of the most proletarian of cities with a strong tradition of struggle, whose working people are again growing in self-confidence, and who can and will put an end to the kind of dirty work being done to Glasgow Green and elsewhere by the friends of the property developers.

Such a live culture is much more than the kind of spectator sport which the tourist trade purveyors like Councillor Lally would have us believe. It releases all of the creative energies which this society has suppressed, stunted or misdirected.

Once released, such energies cannot but have political consequences, as the downfall in Eastern Europe of more powerful Stalinist regimes than Group leader Lally's has shown.

All the facts

We want to know all the facts about the finances and cost of Culture City 1990, including its sinking Marie Celeste of a flagship, 'Glasgow's Glasgow'.

We want to know all the facts about the umpteen property deals affecting Glasgow's public parks and other municipal land.

We want to know all the facts about Frank Lafferty's dealings with Glasgow District Council.

What about an interim account and assessment of this halfway through 1990, Councillor Lally?

Workers City

Those who know us will know that the last thing we are is a group of dilettantes. As for hysteria, that seems to be coming exclusively from the direction of Neil "I demand that you stop" Wallace, depute director of festivals, and Pat 'cultural milker' Lally.

Councillor Lally's talk of "whingers" and "the pro-poverty lobby" sounds much the same as the Tories denouncing those who dare to criticise their attacks on the poor.

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*Expert testimony
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Adrian Smith
INSTITUTE

Campaign

We intend to continue to campaign throughout 1990 and beyond to expose the Council's follies of 1990, and to defend Elspeth King, the Glasgow Green and the people's culture in "the Glasgow Keelie".

We will also continue to develop our own cultural activities whether in prose, poetry, song, imaginative politics, other media or in our own series of Workers City Nights.

Those who wish to help us are welcome to come along to our open meetings in the Scotia Bar any Monday night.

Yes, the future of our city is in the hands of its people rather than in the Council's. Let the politicians know what you think.

Ed Donaldson	Leslie Foster	Jeanette McGinn	Jack Withers
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(Elaine Smith) Jim Kelman 4 Brendan McLaughlin 10 Jim McKay 7 8

Hugh Savage 10 11

Workers City

Saatchi and Saatchi

Contrary to official criticism the campaign on behalf of Elspeth King was not hijacked by the Workers' City group, it was launched by it. But the campaign quickly developed beyond that point, as the enormous range of letters to the Glasgow Herald ^{and the 10,000 signed petition will} testify. The only concern of the campaign is the shabby treatment of Ms King. Its one objective is, and always has been, the righting of a quite specific wrong: Ms King should be returned to controlling power within the People's Palace, which in the present situation means that she be installed as Keeper of Social History.

But it isn't just a vociferous and antagonistic minority who see a connection with this affair and the European Capital of Culture Year. Mr Neil Wallace of the Festivals Unit is "absolutely incensed" by those who do so. In that case let his wrath descend heavily not only on the "pathetic, factless, plank-walkers" he so despises, but also on certain city officials for whom the campaign on behalf of Ms King is proving a major embarrassment. They have let it be known they are "alarmed by what they see as a threat to the council's whole policy" for 1990. The Deputy Director of the Festivals Unit must also have a word with no less a personage than the Leader of the District Council himself, for he is now on record with his reference to "the backlash" of the affair as "inevitable": it has "focused attention on the 1990 Cultural Capital of Europe". Perhaps Mr Wallace and Mr Lally "can get inside the tent" and hammer it out in private, then they can stream outwards and inform the public of the outcome.

The shabby treatment of Elspeth King has caused a split within the Council, and the Glasgow Labour Group has "deplored the decision" not to appoint her. The Festivals Unit itself is rightly generous in her praise. Her one real fault seems to lie in her "imperfect understanding of how political systems work and how they can be used as allies". In the opinion of Mr Wallace, she has "alienated possible powerful supporters within the political systems." No doubt the Leader of the District Council

Lally claiming
Wall made comm Hee
for Spaulding's job

politically naive
too clever by half

is such a potentially "powerful supporter". As far as the current controversy is concerned much of his power lies in the fact that he is allowed to speak, whereas his colleagues have been reprimanded for doing so, and then gagged publicly. But as he himself points out, council members simply cannot "interfere with the appointment since it is expressly forbidden".

Given Mr Lally's high public profile many folk in the city will find it difficult to imagine him not interfering in anything, but his opinion on "the inevitable backlash" the affair has had on the Year of Culture is probably shared by the majority of people outside the Festivals Unit.

But a certain consistency does arrive in their attack on critics of the European Cultural Capital Year. These are variously described by Mr Lally as "well-to-do authors" "the pro-poverty lobby" "these dilettanti" "professional whingers" "those who choose deliberately to exclude themselves". He also quotes the Director of the Unit, Mr Bob Palmer, referring to a "Workers' City-type". But Mr Wallace is more specific; he names some of the signatories below, for what he terms a "pathetic, factless, plank-walking, anti-1990-ism" which he describes as "an embarrassment to this city and all of its cultural workforce". The phrase "cultural workforce" is used in an interesting way here; it denotes those who administer the 'culture industry'; culture no longer has anything to do with those who create art, music, literature, drama; nothing to do with those who go to art galleries, museums, theatres, concerts, readers of books and so on.

Apart from a small minority those who support the campaign do not align themselves with "Workers' City". This group is few in number and usually meet once a week in a pub. It is not affiliated to any particular party, nor indeed to any particular political line; within the group generally there is a very wide range of opinion. If there is one unifying factor amongst those involved it is simply an antipathy to the Glasgow, European Capital of Culture Year enterprise and what they see as

represented by it. In this basic criticism has been consistent. No matter how such city officials try to allay the fears of those who support the campaign the treatment of Elspeth King simply cannot be divorced from its local - nor national - context. And this is a time when almost anything you care to name has been transformed into an 'asset'. In the Year of Culture this is particularly true, when even nebulous entities of the nature of art, drama, history, music, literature and so on have become part of the "cultural industry", they too are assets; and the problem with assets, no matter the industry, is that in the final analysis they are always disposable.

Elsewhere supporters of the campaign generally (not just folk connected to the Workers' City group) have been termed "crypto-communist" "self proclaimed anarchists" "trotskyists" "aggrieved pseudo-intellectuals" "racists" ~~and so on~~

The whole affair has been well described by one correspondent of the Glasgow Herald's letters page column as 'shameful'. It is indeed shameful. But the longer it goes on the deeper become the ramifications, the wider the political implications. Already the Glasgow District Labour Party "has deplored the decision not to appoint its Elspeth King". It also "has had to remind (Labour) councillors that the party's policy was to oppose any private development on Glasgow Green, including Flashers' Muga". ^{fact} The continued news about changes or ^{new} developments in places like the City Walls or Glasgow Green, or along the banks of the Clyde are greeted with horror by many folk, not so much at the prospect of change, but by the fact that such decisions seem to have been made already. ^{manifesto}

It is no secret that the People's Palace itself has been an 'irritant' to officials over the years. Mr Lally and other politicians have distanced themselves from the possibility of overturning the decision on the grounds that such matters are none of their business. Unfortunately, in the not too distant future, the 'business' we are here talking about is the social

history of the city itself. It seems we are now seeing the creation of yet another business enterprise to put alongside the new "City Building", perhaps they'll give it the title "City Museums and Art Galleries (Glasgow) Ltd."; what a wealth of assets will lie at its disposal. In what way can a city be 'owned'? Who can own a city? Is a city a business? The way the city of Glasgow is now operating most closely resembles a business in a period of transition; thus it is being made attractive to potential shareholders. The good assets are being cleaned up and the bad assets are being kept out of sight. Disposable assets are being made attractive to potential buyers, and then sold.

Officials are castigating folk for daring to criticise the Year of Culture; they react as though those who attack the enterprise are attacking the city, thus instead of defending the enterprise they somehow seem to be defending Glasgow itself, critics are therefore treated as traitors to the cause. But unlike certain waged employees and district councillors of the city the right to freedom of speech and expression still remains for the vast majority of Glaswegians. Mr Wallace threatens individual critics that they "had better be prepared to prove your point with the facts, financial or otherwise". This is easier said than done. It is very difficult to try and negate something without at the same time seeming to verify its existence. The entire Year of Culture enterprise is so shadowy that once you start saying what it isn't, those in control will become able to say what it is. At the moment who knows what 'it' is, aside from a name, and the fact that according to Mr Lally: "It is the intention of the City Council and our colleagues on Strathclyde Region that we are going to use the title to the maximum advantage - we are going to milk it for all it is worth."

Messrs Lally, Wallace and Palmer et al are missing the point entirely. Glasgow is not the property of "Culture City" One central and predictable aspect of the Year of Culture enterprise

has been how it has sought to work on the assumption that everything taking place in the world of art during 1990 is taking place by virtue of itself. Those who object to being dragged into Mr Wallace's "tent" are dismissed in one way or another. But it isn't only writers and artists who demand the right not to be hijacked. Those who criticise 'Culture Year' are not necessarily interested in whether or not the 'cultural workforce' of Glasgow are doing their job in such a way as to warrant the salaries they receive. That would be to assume the worth and integrity of the enterprise itself. In view of remarks made by Mr Lally and others this sort of assumption is, to say the least, rather difficult. Perhaps if he and other officials had given the people of Glasgow the benefit of their views on "culture" at an earlier stage there would have been far fewer "to milk" for the sake of the "£2 billion of investment"

For most of the "anti-1990" lobby the only facts that are of ultimate concern is the final reckoning. But facts such as these cannot conceivably be known until long after 1990, not by the Festivals Unit and not by Mr Lally's Labour-controlled District Council. Perhaps by the time they are rendered public no one will be left to account for them. The 'cultural workforce' will in all likelihood have moved on to a different enterprise, perhaps to a different part of the country. Many of the elected representatives of the people of the city will also have moved on, perhaps Mr Lally and other responsible councillors will be included in this group. Only the future will decide that. But it will be of interest to many Glaswegians - not just "Workers' City-types" - to work out the profit and the loss, to see who makes the profit and who takes the loss, which is to be public and which is to be private. Matters of finance are never simple.

People not only inside but outside the Greater Glasgow area must be wondering what is currently going on in the city. Almost every day of the past few weeks there has been coverage of some sort or another of what has become known as the 'Elspeth King affair'. Letters to the Glasgow Herald now amount to more than 500, by far the largest postbag on any single topic in recent years. Contrary to the expectations of some city officials the controversy shows no signs of fading away; recently it has come to the attention of the national media.

The affair was sparked off by the creation of the new post of Keeper of Social History in the city's Museums Department. An immediate and crucial consequence of this is the denotion of the person in charge at the People's Palace. Ultimate control of that museum and all of its considerable social and historical artefacts will now pass from there to the holder of the newly created post, ~~to be~~ ^{to be} ~~based~~ ^{based} elsewhere in the city. Elspeth King, present curator of the People's Palace, applied for the ~~job~~ ^{job} but did not succeed, even although in the opinion of most people she had already been doing the ~~work~~ ^{work} ~~for~~ ^{and more} for the past 16 years or so. ↻

run on | Much of the tremendously exciting collection of social and historical artefacts both on display and in storage (due to lack of space) in the basement of a nearby warehouse has been gathered with painstaking care and expertise by Ms King and her assistant Michael Donnelly, often moving in at the 11th hour in an effort to save important relics from the Council rubbish tip. Together they have transformed the People's Palace into one of the more famous social history museums in Europe.

Workers City | The campaign on behalf of Elspeth King was launched by the Workers' City group but has developed beyond it. Its only concern is the snobby treatment of Ms King; its primary objective is, and always has been, the righting of a quite specific wrong: Ms King should be returned to controlling power within the People's Palace, which in this instance ^{might} means that she be installed as Keeper of Social History. Apart from a small minority those who support the campaign do not ~~specifically~~ align themselves with "Workers' City".

This group is few in number and ^{usually once a week} meet ~~regularly~~ in a ~~pub~~ pub. It is not affiliated to any particular party, nor indeed to any particular political line. If there is one unifying factor amongst those involved it is simply an antipathy to what they see as represented - rightly or wrongly - by the Glasgow European Capital of Culture Year. In this their criticism has been consistent.

There is a very wide range of opinion within the group

One recent letter in support of the campaign was published by the Glasgow Herald; it bore the names of some 63 writers. The majority of those whose names appear are in no way connected to the Workers City group. The letter was composed by myself, however, and I am connected to the group. In the letter I make an explicit criticism of the Glasgow's Glasgow event and, by extension, an underlying criticism of the "Cultural Capital of Europe Year". I make no apologies for that. No matter how much city officials try to allay the fears of those who support the campaign the affair simply cannot be divorced from ^{both local and} its national context. And this is a time when almost anything you care to name has been transformed into an 'asset'. In the Year of Culture this is particularly true, when even nebulous entities of the nature of art, drama, history, music, literature and so on have become part of the cultural industry, they too are assets; and the problem with assets, in the final analysis, is that they are always disposable.

But it is not only ~~an~~ an antagonistic minority who are aware of the implications arising from "the Elspeth King affair". The campaign is proving a major embarrassment to city officials some of whom have become "alarmed by what they see as a threat to the council's whole policy" for 1990. It has caused a split in Glasgow's Labour Group and many ~~Labour~~ councillors have condemned the shabby treatment of Ms King.

within Mr Pat Lally's Labour-controlled District Council

^{Indeed, one} One of the tiny group of voices to be raised in defence of the new appointment has come via a 2000 word press statement from no less a personage than Mr Patrick Lally himself, ~~leader of Glasgow District Council~~. Although Mr Lally was Chairperson of the 15 strong all-party committee who interviewed Ms King and the two other candidates for the new post - under "the council's equal

opportunities policy" - he points out that he has in no sense "interfered with the appointment". He then refers to "the backlash" of the affair as "inevitable" in the way it has "focussed attention on the 1990 Cultural Capital of Europe".

Mr Lally's opinion is shared by a great many people but apparently not by the Festivals Unit. This is strange, in view of the fact that one of the apparent purposes of the 2000 word document is a defence of that selfsame unit. Only one week before ^{Also} ~~statement~~ Mr Neil Wallace (Depute Director of the unit) was declaring "that absolutely increases me about the present campaign is the insidious way in which the present crisis is somehow wrapped up in European Cultural Capital Year..."

But a certain consistency arrives in their attack on critics of the European Cultural Capital Year. These are variously described by Mr Lally as "well-heeled authors" "the pro-poverty lobby" "these dilettanti" "professional whingers" "those who choose deliberately to exclude themselves". Mr Wallace is more specific; he names myself, Pacquar McLay, Hugh Savage, and the "rest" for what he terms our "pathetic, footless, plank-walking, anti-1990-ism" which he describes as "an embarrassment to this city and all of its cultural workforce". Like myself Pacquar McLay is a writer; Hugh Savage is a retired plumber. Elsewhere supporters of the campaign have been termed 'crypto-communist' 'self proclaimed anarchists' 'trotskyist' 'aggrieved pseudo-intellectuals' 'racists' (the person who was appointed to the new post over the head of Ms King is an Irishman by the name of Mark O'Neill).

The Director refers to "Workers' City - type"

The whole affair has been well described by one correspondent of the Glasgow Herald's letters page column as 'shameful'. It is indeed shameful. ^{But the} longer it goes on the deeper become the ramifications. Mr Lally and other politicians have distanced themselves from the possibility of overturning the decision on the grounds that such matters are none of their business. Unfortunately, in the not too distant future, the 'business' we are here talking about is the social and historical artefacts of the city itself, 'assets' of Glasgow's new heritage 'industry'

focussed attention

and the under the implication

Recent developments
CITY HALL SPACE
Glasgow GREEN
cultural
services

the most important

NO MANDATE ON GREEN FROM Labour Group
i.e. not on manifesto

.....

 The attack by Mr Lally and the Festivals Unit may be unwarranted in many respects, but it is certainly true that critics of the European City of Culture 1990 do exist. ^{and not only within the Workers' City Group} Unlike waged employers and councillors of the city no one at the moment has the power to stick a gag over our mouth, or cut off the electrical supply to this word-processor. ^{such as Eilspeth King} Speaking personally, I shall continue to be a critic of it. Prior to this it was my preference not to be involved at all, and that meant trying neither to affirm nor deny it. Even to have come out in opposition was to have been 'included'; it would have meant that the powers that be had managed to somehow rope their critics under their own umbrella, or to come inside the tent as the Festival Unit's Deputy Director described it. Once this happens of course dissent is no longer a problem. Those who own the tent set the agenda.

certain
as

It is very difficult to negate something without at the same time seeming to verify its existence. The entire enterprise is so shadowy that once you start saying what it isn't, those in control will become able to say what it is. At the moment who 'knows what 'it' is, aside from the fact that folk like Mr Pat Lally are quite content to be quoted in the following manner: "It is the intention of the City Council and our colleagues on Strathclyde Region that we are going to use the title to the maximum advantage - we are going to milk it for all it is worth."

Meanwhile the Festivals Unit are castigating the "anti-1990" critics for their lack of knowledge of "the facts" in relation to the fine job they are doing. This is an interesting point. There is indeed a case for arguing that criticism can only be made when the goals and objectives of a thing are known; anything else is prejudice. Only when you know these details can you start working out whether or not the enterprise is a success. It will be a success in terms of its goals and objectives. The argument gets a bit more complicated when the entire ideology that gives rise to

these goals and objectives is the target of the the critics. Again to speak personally, I have absolutely no interest in whether or not the 'cultural workforce' of Glasgow (as Neil Wallace describes himself and his colleagues) are doing their job in such a way as to warrant the salaries they receive. That would be to assume the worth of the enterprise itself. I do not assume the worth of this enterprise at all. This is the main reason why I preferred to remain distanced from it. Mr Lally's view of the arts is very ably put forward in the above quotation. Perhaps if he had given other writers, artists, musicians and so on the benefit of his view at an earlier stage there would have been far fewer around for him "to milk" for the sake of the "£2 billion of investment"

The way funding has been allocated is not under attack by myself. It makes no odds to me about shortfalls in cash, or whether the fees received by Pavarotti or Sinatra or the Rolling Stones or Frankie and Josie or whoever can be justified. The Festival Unit has attacked ~~people~~ ^{people} for ~~their~~ ^{their} ignorance of 'the facts'. I am so ignorant of the facts he refers to that I don't even know what they are not. So I am guilty. I do not know the facts. I am interested to know if he himself knows the facts. What can these facts be that he refers to? The only facts that are of ultimate concern is the final reckoning. [But other facts are of interest. It would be nice to know how much dough went to artists and how much dough went to arts administrators. How much dough went to this theatre company and how much went to that one. How much to this project as opposed to that one? to this gallery and not the one over there, to this history of Glasgow but not that history of Glasgow. Also other facts such as who made the decision. On what grounds was the decision arrived at. There would be all sorts of facts it would be nice to know. Ultimately though, the main facts are the gross budget and breakdown of that budget. But these facts cannot conceivably be known until long after 1990, not by the Festivals Unit and not by Mr Lally's District Council. ^{if ever}

Perhaps by the time these sort of facts are public ^{no one} will be left to account for them. The 'cultural workforce' will in

that J.S.P. will now post things from exhibition
i.e. political like "ANTIPOUTAX etc
Spalding now saying M. nuer was before

Now no longer in charge of ordinary staff
no control of collections now gone
Wallace - Performance Art ~~Arts~~ Palmer - PURSER

WOMAN / SHEFFIELD

Hiring Man gallery paintings
to business firms

- etc.

STAMPIN'S GUILD
People for ANGST 3rd
Meeting

Campaign

We intend to continue to campaign throughout 1990 and beyond to expose the Council's follies of 1990, and to defend Elspeth King, the Glasgow Green and the people's culture in "the Glasgow Keelie".

We will also continue to develop our own cultural activities whether in prose, poetry, song, imaginative politics, other media or in our own series of Workers City Nights.

Those who wish to help us are welcome to come along to our open meetings in the Scotia Bar any Monday night.

Yes, the future of our city is in the hands of its people rather than in the Council's. Let the politicians know what you think.

Ned
Ed Donaldson 2 Leslie Foster 3 Jeanette McGinn 6 Jack Withers 12

Norman Bissell 1 Ian McKechnie 3 Tommy Keyes 5 Farquhar McLay 4

Elaine Smith Jim Kelman 4 Brendan McLaughlin 10 Jim McKay 7

Hugh Savage 10

Workers City